

THE COST OF IMPROVING VULNERABLE HOUSING



Recommendations for Investments in Housing Resilience from an Analysis of Global Project Data.¹

By 2030, **3 billion** people are expected to be living without access to adequate housing.²



We can change this by improving existing housing.

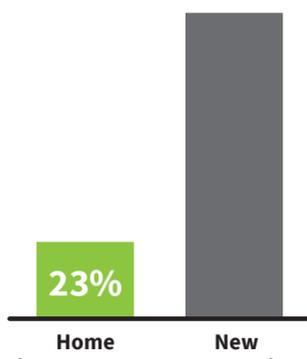
Improving vulnerable housing...

✓ ...is highly cost-effective when compared to new construction.

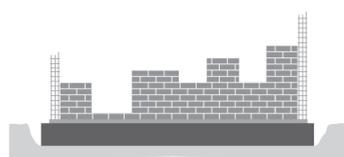


\$133/m²

The average cost of improving existing housing.



Improving existing housing cost on average **23%** of the average cost of building new housing.



\$588/m²

The average cost of new construction.

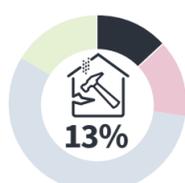
✓ ...is a cost-effective way to support safe densification.

Upgrading a house to safely receive an additional story in the future cost **35%** of the average cost of building a new house.³

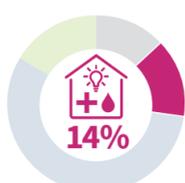


✓ ...should extend beyond disaster mitigation, based on what homeowners need and want.

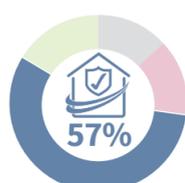
People choose to spend money for home improvement on:



Structural Condition Repairs



Habitability Upgrades



Disaster Mitigation Measures



Finishings and Growth



While the primary objective for all designs was to reduce housing vulnerability through Disaster Mitigation Measures, over **40%** of spending was in other areas. This shows significant demand among homeowners for a range of home improvement measures.

✓ ...is more cost-effective *before* a disaster.



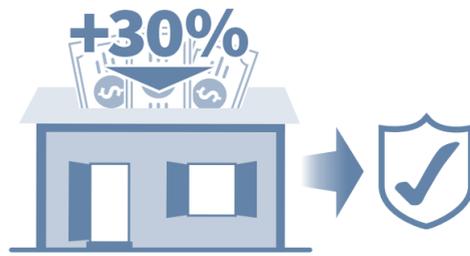
construction costs for home improvement were **1.6 times** higher



spending on Structural Condition Repairs was **6 times** more

✓ ...should go beyond making repairs, to include protection against future risks.

Preventative measures after a disaster can protect the investment for a low additional cost: An additional investment of **30%**—beyond the cost of repairing major damages incurred from the disaster—can ensure the whole home is resilient against future threats.⁴



✓ ...can be made accessible to all income levels.

In the Philippines, incremental Risk Reduction improvements (\$72/m²) were found to be affordable for lower income clients of microfinance institutions. However, subsidies and grants are still needed to make home improvement affordable for the poorest households.



✓ ...should take advantage of the high efficiencies of mitigation against multiple hazards.

Relative to new construction costs, there was **no increase** in the cost of mitigating against both earthquakes and high winds versus only earthquakes; both cases were on average about **1/4** the cost of new construction for the corresponding locations.



Read the full study [here](#).

¹ This study was based on home improvement designs and implementation across 14 countries in Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America and the Pacific Islands. A pool of 1484 home improvement designs that were developed—and in most cases implemented—by Build Change formed the basis of the study.

² UN-Habitat estimate

³ Of the same size in the same locations.

⁴ Based on data from the Sint Maarten post-hurricane (Irma) recovery program.